Setting The Pace – GIS in Lewiston

BY JIM WARD

The City of Lewiston began researching Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in the 1980's as a new method of mapping and parcel/infrastructure management. The old mapping, based on photography of the early 1970's was simply outdated . For the future development of the city, it was essential to have updated land mapping, and an accurate, seamless, intelligent base of current feature conditions and city infrastructure.

GIS became the logical choice and natural progression, since the Engineering Division had been using Computer Aided Design (CAD) for plan drafting and preparation, along with digital survey equipment since 1989-90. By 1996 the city contracted with Camp Dresser & McKee, of Cambridge, MA for GIS consultation and a needs study. Funding was also procured for survey level aerial photography, which was performed by James W. Sewall Co. (JWS), in 1997. This provided detailed and accurate land feature/topographic layering and the resultant CAD data provided the base for upcoming infrastructure and transportation improvements. Since the core of municipal GIS is the land parcel layer, our property tax maps were digitized by JWS and fitted to match actual land features, thus giving us a seamless parcel coverage to link to assessor and other related data.

Today we have approximately 150 layers in the system! Some, like the above, and the sewer and water utility systems, were contracted to consultants to develop. Others, such as zoning and police beats were done in-house. Additional layers were free in that they were downloaded from the Maine Office of GIS and other public websites like the GeoLibrary's recent Maine Aerial Photography Project (which we are utilizing to update our 6 year old land base data).

GIS Everyday … As there are hundreds of miles of roads; sewer; storm water supply; and other infrastructure to maintain, Lewiston's Departments of Public Works and Public Services currently are the largest GIS users. GIS is utilized for such purposes as street tree maintenance and inventory; snow plowing routes; capitol improvement planning; estimates; utility mapping; public project notifications; and field locates. The GIS provided a base for layering systems, such as water mains; sewers; storm drains; and CSO's (Combined Sewer Overflows), so we have complete and accurate inventory models of these essential infrastructure layers. They have been enhanced and hyperlinked with scanned images of engineering drawings, where available, to view design data on the fly! Also, a cus-

Commissioner Wyke Supports Technology

BY MARY N. CLOUTIER

Q. The State has made many strides using information technology, especially with e-government services. Will this be an important part of the Administrations technology vision?

A. Coming from one of the agencies that was instrumental in the establishment of the state portal concept, I am very supportive of the development of e-government services and the efforts of InforME to assist state agencies in providing them. I have seen firsthand how State government can improve its delivery of services through the use of electronic applications. The Internet provides citizens and businesses with a convenient alternative to obtain government services, an important concept in a large rural state such as Maine.

Q. What will be the technological impact of the proposed merger of the Departments of Human Services (DHS) and Behavioral and Developmental Services (BDS)?

A. The merger of DHS and BDS will provide a number of opportunities, including the ability to more effectively

GIS in Lewiston, cont.

tom "system trace" button in the software allows the user to determine the path sewer or storm water would follow through the system if dropped from a particular point. The Water and Sewer service folks even utilize portable GIS in the field.

The Development Department is also heavily reliant on the GIS. Examples of their typical daily use would include generating abutter's lists for Planning Board meetings, housing studies, buildability analyses, economic development planning, general mapping, and endless custom thematic maps.

One city department that unexpectedly benefited from the GIS this past spring was the Auditing/Accounting Department. The infrastructure data layers such as water, sewer, roads (pavement, lane miles), bridges, etc. proved invaluable for the GASB 34 inventory, accounting, and assessment reporting. Retrieving and tabulating that information without GIS would have been very difficult or, in some cases, impossible, as some of the required data did not previously exist.

More than Pretty Maps... The power of GIS is limited only by imagination, intuition, and enthusiasm. At the municipal level, GIS can be utilized by practically every department. Nearly all have databases, tables, statistics, images and incidents, which can be linked spatially. One of the challenges is to get people to recognize GIS as a tool which they can integrate into their activities, beyond the cool maps and inquiry ability. It is a terrific productivity, planning and study tool.

Admittedly, few people get excited about such GIS uses as re-assessments studies and modeling of sewer systems. However, an area which promises to have interesting potential is GIS for Public Safety. This will be presented to Police and Fire, as these departments are certain to benefit from the potential power of GIS. Some examples include: incident pin mapping; accident occurrences; fire alarms; hydrant water pressure; pre-incident planning; major buildings linked to floor plans and/or locations of hazardous materials, etc.

As GIS gains exposure, further implementations and new uses will emerge citywide. The goal is to have every city department utilizing GIS to their potential. We have only scratched the surface!

Access to GIS... The GIS data resides on a city network server and is available to departments via the City Wide Area Network. About 6-10 users within the city utilize desktop GIS software such as: ArcView or ArcInfo for data editing, layer development and GIS analysis. However, for most people on the network (about 150), interaction with GIS occurs through our WebGIS (IMS) Internet Mapping application. The browser-based IMS provides simple GIS functionality such as: viewing layers; basic queries; abutter's lists; and printing maps, satisfying all but more complex GIS analyses. Other functions can be built in.

GIS for everyone... An equally important benefit of GIS is enhanced customer service through ease of access to information. To further accomplish this, we hope to have a public access kiosk at city hall, running a secure public version of the WebGIS soon. This will allow the general public, surveyors, developers, real estate researchers, taxpayers etc., to look at Lewiston GIS data, identify, list, and even print maps. This will be the prelude to launching an Internet version via a link from the City web site, which we hope to make available by spring.

Our sister city, Auburn, deserves credit here, as they too are on similar paths in terms of utilization of GIS. The cities of L/A joined forces in building each of their GIS from the start, minimizing duplication, and we continue to collaborate.

Now that computer hardware is becoming more affordable, software more advanced and user friendly, GIS is becoming more feasible even for smaller communities. Certainly, GIS is the wave of the future for municipalities everywhere.

Jim Ward is the GIS Coordinator of the City of Lewiston. He may be reached by calling 207-753-0330 ext. 270 or by e-mailing jward@ci.lewiston.me.us.

New Maine Marine License Renewal

BY RENEE LORING

Maine's marine fishing industry now has the advantage of on-line service delivery.

Why spend the day traveling to the Department of Marine Resources office when you could be fishing? With this new electronic delivery service, 7,000 lobster and crab harvesters will have an alternate license renewal method available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Department of Marine Resources, in partnership with InforME, Maine's eGovernment portal, is pleased to offer Maine's lobster and crab fishermen a convenient on-line service option called Maine Marine Licensing. The first on-line marine license renewal service will be open to lobster and crab harvesters. The new service will be available soon at: *http://www.MaineMarine Licensing.com/* for the 2004 renewal period.

The license renewal service is available to both commercial and non-commercial license holders. By inputting identifying information, such as name and social security number or date of birth, a license record is quickly retrieved and a payment screen provided. Credit card payment is accepted through secure socket layer, ensuring security and privacy of personal information. With instant access and payment, the renewal process is quick and easy!

Lobster and Crab Harvesting license holders are required to renew annually. This renewal service is only available to Maine residents. For more information regarding the Department of Marine Resources, please visit: *http://www.maine.gov/dmr/*

For more information about InforME, please visit: *http://www.maine.gov/informe/.*

Since September, 1999 Renee Loring, has worked at InforME, facilitating marketing initiatives by promoting new and existing on-line services. In addition to her marketing efforts, Renee manages eGovernment applications, and in her spare time, enjoys attending music events, theatrical productions, traveling, and reading.

integrate data so that case managers have access to all appropriate client information. Providing the tools to more efficiently share information between various programs serving the same client base, should lead to a better use of resources and allow staff to be more effective in the delivery of services. This is an overarching concept that can generally be applied to state government services. It is important for government agencies to explore ways to deliver services in a manner that sees past the "silos" and towards a more integrated style, based upon service delivery that is streamlined and customer oriented.

Q. How important is it to include municipalities when thinking about integration of services?

A. The vision to integrate services at the state level should be extended to include services at the municipal and county levels. Current services and transactions that require interaction with more than one government entity are natural starting points to begin this type of integration. A few agencies have already begun this cooperative process. The Secretary of State, through the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, has partnered with municipalities to provide vehicle registration and payment of local excise taxes online. Additionally, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has implemented MOSES, at municipal locations, to meet a variety of licensing needs for sportsmen.

The cooperation among state, municipal and county governments is not limited to Web-based services. Opportunities to establish partnerships may also be available in the area of Homeland Security. By effectively coordinating resources and funding, communication systems and training efforts could be developed that would enhance public safety across the state.

Q. The Chief Information Officer is developing a protocol for management of technology projects. What type of benefits do you anticipate from this effort?

A. State government needs to coordinate its technology initiatives and part of this coordination can be achieved by having state agencies develop technol-

ogy plans as part of the budgeting process. By planning strategically, we can ensure the state's investment in technological resources will provide long term benefits. The project management protocol being developed by the Chief Information Officer will be an important part of this initiative, ensuring that the State obtains the greatest value for its investments in technology. Additionally, the CIO's format will provide smaller agencies with the necessary tools to undertake these projects.

Q. As Chair of the Information Services Policy Board (ISPB), what role do you anticipate the Information Services Managers Group (ISMG) will play in working with the ISPB?

A. I feel the ISPB and the ISMG will have many opportunities to work together on the various technology issues facing the State. The CIO has already begun discussions with the ISMG to open up the lines of communication and find ways in which we can coordinate our efforts for the benefit of everyone. I have been pleased to know that the members of the ISMG share our desire to work collectively on technology initiatives.

Q. How will the agency IT Security Policies complement current technology efforts?

A. In accordance with the ISPB requirement, the CIO has begun efforts to assist state agencies with the implementation of various IT policies, most recently the IT Security Policy. Each agency is required to develop compliance plans that ensure the integrity and security of its applications, data and systems. Several training sessions have been held and have been very well attended. The IT policies are important components to the State's overriding goal of enhancing and supporting the functionality and security of our network and operating systems.

Additionally, the Bureau of Information Services (BIS) has been instrumental in strengthening the State's network. BIS provides important enterprise services to all state agencies and is continually taking steps to improve the network.

Microsoft Windows Server Training

BY MIKE POMERLEAU

The Bureau of Information Services (BIS) has arranged for a local, two-day, free, Microsoft training course on February 2 and 3, 2004, that will provide a technical overview of Microsoft Windows Server 2003. As we consider how this product will benefit our individual organizations and the State, I feel it is important to learn about the new capabilities that it provides.

This course will be led by one of the company's top Microsoft Certified Trainers, so I'm confident that this in-depth, technical training event will be well worth your time. This class will be directed to an MCP-MCSA level of understanding (non-technical IT managers are welcome). It will be taught in a seminar style (not hands on) with lots of demonstrations.

The content will highlight improvements in DNS; group policy; Active Directory; terminal services; command line tools; Internet Information Services 6.0; PKI; Security; and more. The process of moving from a Windows NT 4 Server to a Windows Server 2003 and migrating from a NT 4 Domain to an Active Directory Organizational Unit or Domain will be examined.

To ensure receipt of relevant materials, please register at: *http://www.asentus.net/ event_registration/microsoft/ WINDOWS2003/* (use course code: H4wV8oboZ6) by Thursday January 22, 2004. The location of the class will be determined based on the number enrolled. Enrollees will receive confirmation the week of January 26.

Feel free to pass this announcement to all state IT professionals working with Microsoft Operating Systems who could benefit by attending.

Fire Marshal Has Gone BATS (Bomb and Arson Tracking System)

BY MARY N. CLOUTIER

Two years in development, BATS is a new web-based system developed by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), which enables public safety agencies to share information locally, and nationally. While in development, Maine fire investigators "test drove" this system by entering data of complex actual cases to ensure BATS would actually provide needed data upon completion.

Because BATS is web-based (no new hardware or software to purchase) and developed and maintained by the ATF, Maine has incurred very little expense in acquiring this system. How did Maine become one of six pilot sites[1]? It started when Sergeant Stewart Jacobs taught at the National Fire Academy (*http://www.usfa.fema.gov/*), and subsequently became a resource for the development of BATS. State Fire Marshal, John C. Dean, observes "Maine fire investigators are respected nationally." BATS is Maine's first state-wide system and it enables fire investigators to enter and access information about investigations, which includes: origin; type of arson device used; suspects; losses; and geographic location.

Why is this so important? John Dean says, "On-line sharing of information between investigators throughout the State enables us to determine if there are similarities or patterns in cases." "For example, arsonists[2] leave 'markers', and are often mobile, and investigators from Aroostook to York Counties need access to BATS data to collaboratively solve cases." In addition to BATS the office collects fire data from fire departments across the state in a system known as the Maine Fire Incident Reporting System (MEFIRS).

He points out that analysis of local data nationally can also point to trends. A single TV set fire doesn't initially seem important, but aggregated with other data via the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), it could point to a defect with a particular type/model. This data becomes increasingly valu-able with time, as the database grows; particularly since state fire marshal personnel will verify the correctness of data prior to its transmission to NFIRS. (Until this month, data was entered locally into the Maine Fire Incident Reporting System, and data was returned via an "annual report" from the vendor. Not only was the data not verified from a state perspective, the Fire Marshal's Office did not have daily on-line access to it.)

William Hoover, Special Agent In Charge (SAC) of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Boston Field Division, and Maine State Fire Marshal John Dean (on the left) signed a Memorandum of Understanding at a ceremony in Portland September 30, 2003.

To support the MEFIRS and BATS effort, the office received a $104,000 grant from Homeland Defense funds, to purchase hardened laptops for all investigators and inspectors and a server to collect the data and connect the investigators and inspectors to their supervisors and the central office. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding[3] was signed with ATF in September to create the Maine State Joint Arson/Explosives Task Force. Investigators will share office space in southern and northern Maine and some state fire investigators will become deputized as federal marshals. AFT will also contribute resources to support complex cases (e.g. some investigations require cranes and other heavy equipment, and the ATF National Response Team), and has appropriated funds to pay for Maine investigators' overtime costs incurred while working on the Joint Task Force cases. Dean observes, "Success working with ATF has to do with people and their mutually respectful relationships."

Over the years, the mission of the State Fire Marshal's office has evolved toward more fire prevention[4], professional investigation and prosecution. There is very low staff turnover, and John says, "This is the best job I've ever had. I like the people and the work makes a big difference in the lives of Maine people." For more information on the Office, visit *http://www.state.me.us/dps/fmo/homepage.htm.*

Questions? Contact State Fire Marshal John C. Dean by calling 207-624-8964 or e-mailing john.c.dean @maine.gov.

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[1] Maine is the only pilot state. Other pilot sites include: Glendale, Arizona's police and fire departments, Winchester, Virginia's police department, Tulsa, Oklahoma's fire department and Southlake, Texas' public safety department.

[2] Typically arson is associated with insurance fraud, embezzlement, homicide or other crimes. Thus Maine's fire investigators are sworn and trained police, and also must qualify as expert witnesses, in order to testify in court cases.

[3] See *http://www.state.me.us/dps/fmo/homepage.htm*

[4] For example inspections of Department of Human Services licensed facilities e.g. nursing homes, day care facilities etc., and review of construction plans and subsequent inspections of public buildings.

◎ DID YOU KNOW?

The Maine State Police, in cooperation with InforME, have recently provided an on-line site which, for a fee, enables you to electronically request criminal history record and juvenile crime information maintained by the Maine State Police. This records search will provide you with conviction and adjudication information for adult and juvenile crimes committed within the State of Maine. There is a difference regarding what information will be disseminated for an adult versus a juvenile.

Most search results will be returned via e-mail within two hours. If your search results are not returned within twelve hours, then your inquiry may be one that requires manual intervention. Search results for inquiries that require manual intervention may be delayed for up to twelve weeks. For more information see *http://www.informe.org/PCR/*.

WinterKids Program!

Provides FREE outdoor physical activity opportunities for ALL Maine 5th, 6th, and 7th graders! Your children or grandchildren in those grades might be interested, for sure!

The WinterKids Passport offers all Maine 5th, 6th, and 7th graders an entire season of free, healthy, outdoor winter recreation opportunities including cross-country and downhill skiing, snowshoeing, snowboarding, and ice skating, along with free or discounted lessons and rentals.

The Passport also offers parents and siblings of all Passport holders free or discounted tickets, lessons, and rentals, ensuring that families develop healthy lifestyles together. You can apply for passports NOW on-line at *http://www.winterkids.org* or get an application form from schools, Peoples Bank, Hannaford Bros, or LL Bean. There is an application fee ($15), but there are also scholarships available to pay for the fee if someone can't afford it. Passports will be delivered starting in mid-December and may take up to 4 weeks for delivery.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Maine Infragard Chapter Forming
Want To Join?

Everyone knows what happened on September 11, 2001. The images from that day are etched in each of our minds to some degree or another. We learned that day that our country was not nearly as safe as we'd thought; we learned the lesson the hard way. The feeling of vulnerability was stronger than it had been since another day of infamy in December of 1941.

Many people took a step forward that day and in the days following, raised their hands and asked, "What can I do?"

For those of us involved in the technology industry here in Maine, there is something we can do. In 1996, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) started a pilot program, with the purpose of creating a lasting cooperative relationship between the federal government and businesses of all sizes, called Infragard (*www.infragard.net*). The FBI knew that the infrastructure of the United States was becoming more and more dependant on all types of technology and that, as this happened, traditional methods of protection would no longer be enough to ensure its stability.

Infragard was created to establish a cooperative effort to focus on infrastructure stability and protection. Since 1996, 42 states have established Infragard chapters in which the government, private and public businesses meet and discuss all kinds and levels of threats to security, from cracker attacks on a single member to the potential for a terrorist strike against the United States Power Grid. Special guest speakers with expertise in various areas of security are often invited to speak.

A number of people dedicated to this cooperation are already traveling from Maine to monthly Infragard chapter meetings in Boston, Massachusetts.

Many more are interested, but simply cannot afford the investment of time and money required to make the trip.

I've recently been working with Special Agent Jim Herbert of the Bangor, Maine office of the FBI, on a cracker case. In the course of our discussions, we both expressed an interest in seeing an Infragard chapter closer to home, but in a central enough location that techs from all over the state can participate without excessive travel or expense. To this end, I have created a mailing list dedicated to the creation of a Maine Infragard Chapter.

Take a look at the main Infragard website and consider if this is a program that might benefit you, your company, or your state. If so, please subscribe following the instructions below. Even if you don't feel this is something you'd be interested in, please consider forwarding this invitation to your friends and acquaintances that are also in technology fields. (And no, bad luck will NOT befall you if you do not pass this e-mail along, NOR will a certificate to Applebee's or Disneyland appear on your screen when you forward it to ten or more friends!)

To Subscribe:
Send an e-mail with a blank subject to Infragard_me_sub@telfordaviation.com. In the first line of the message body, put "SUBSCRIBE INFRAGARD_ME" without the quotes.

To Unsubscribe:
Send an e-mail with a blank subject to Infragard_me_sub@telfordaviation.com. In the first line of the message body, put "UNSUBSCRIBE INFRAGARD_ME" without the quotes.

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27,000+ Citizens Filed Taxes via Internet Last Year!

BY BRIAN HODGES

Taxes! We may not like them but most are required to file them. Maine Revenue Services (MRS) has made the process very easy by offering three easy ways of filing. FastFile includes the E-File method of utilizing tax preparers or purchasing retail software, Telefile utilizes a touch tone telephone, and I-File is MRS' free Internet application.

I-File was first launched in the summer of 2000, when MRS wanted to test their newest invention with a limited audience. That year, a small number of taxpayers located this unadvertised application and logged on to file their taxes. This sampling provided MRS Systems and Programming personnel the tools they needed to fine tune the application, so it would be suitable for 2001's full filing season.

The concept of free Internet tax filing caught on quickly and MRS confirmed over 15,000 returns during 2001. Maine taxpayers liked this new convenience as evidenced by nearly a 50% growth in 2002. I-File was here to stay. In order to obtain in-depth feedback about the application, an optional survey, which included a free form comment section, was added in 2002. Maine taxpayers were very eager to share their opinions and the majority were very pleased with I-File. MRS also received many comments recommending particular changes and enhancements. Modifications were made for the 2003 season and the same survey was released so a comparison between responses could be made. 1000+ surveys were completed and 88% of respondents rated I-File as good or excellent. Samplings of the comments include:

• This was the easiest tax form I ever did.
• This was great! Thank you Maine, just another reason why I love it here!!!
• This is great! Saves the State money in mailing of forms and helps the tax payer to know that the filing is correct. Thank you!!
• It made filing my taxes much easier. No need to photocopy my return and run to the mailbox. Thank you!

MRS concluded its FastFile income tax season on 10/15/2003. I-File numbers for this last tax season totaled over 27,000 returns! Due to the popularity of the application, MRS made a strategic business move to have I-File reengineered for the upcoming season. The ever increasing volume of filers dictated the need for a faster and more robust system. MRS also incorporated feedback from the optional survey responses to enhance the content, screen flow, and layout.

A few highlights from MRS' I-File application include:

• Refunds in 14 days or less!
• Delayed electronic payment of tax due, otherwise known as "file now, pay later". (You file the return when you're ready but delay the withdrawal of funds from your financial institution up to and including the due date of 04/15/2004.)
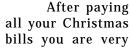• Let us do the math. Just enter the specified amounts from your Federal tax return and withholding statements. I-File does the rest.
• E-mail notification of your confirmed return.
• PINs are not required. If you did not receive a PIN on your tax booklet or by separate mailing, you will simply need to mail a one page signature document.
• Secure access with the ability to exit the application and return later to complete it, without losing your data.
• Electronic returns cost about three times less to process than paper returns. This saves the State of Maine tax dollars.

MRS invites all Maine taxpayers to give I-File a try. We are confident you will be pleased with this fast and easy approach to tax filing. For more information, visit our website at *www.maine.gov/revenue* and look for the "FastFile" link.

Brian S Hodges is a Management Analyst II with the Systems & Programming division of Maine Revenue Services. He has worked in State government for over 12 years and has been with MRS since 1998. He can be reached at brian.s.hodges@maine.gov

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Challenge

BY LESTER DICKEY

After paying all your Christmas bills you are very short of cash. You have a total of $9.60 in your pocket. The money is composed of equal numbers of quarters, dimes, and nickels, but no other coins. How many of each do you have?

For no prize, but a greater challenge, try this one. You again have a total of $9.60 in your pocket. The money is composed of quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies. You have an equal number of quarters and nickels, twice as many dimes as quarters, and several pennies. How many pennies do you have?

Please e-mail **Lester Dickey** with your answer and your name, phone number, and the organization for which you work. Or call **Barbara Buck** at **624-9501**. The winner will be drawn from all the correct entries and will receive a **FREE** pizza, either from **CJ's Pizza** or from the **EDOC Cafeteria**. All answers must be in no later than the **14th** of the month.

Last month's challenge brought 45 submissions, with 43 being correct answers. The winner, chosen by random drawing, is **Ellen Lee** of **BIS.**

The answers to last month's Challenge: The next item in the sequence would be "d31" for December 31. The next letter in the other sequence would be "U".

New Hires to the Office of the CIO Team

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) has recently added two new resources to the team. CIO Dick Thompson is very pleased with the Office's staff and they stand ready to provide leadership and support to agency technology efforts across state government. Take a moment to meet Kathy and Kevin. You will find them interesting, dynamic and dedicated to achieving success.

Kathy Record

After growing up in the Hartford Connecticut area, attending college in New York, and working in Boston, Kathy set down roots in Readfield with her husband, who had grown up on a farm in Livermore Falls. They built a house (Kathy knew that tablesaw her father gave her as a college graduation gift would come in handy some day), settled into a very warm, welcoming community and set about raising three children. Kathy worked at the state for DOT for three years before taking a hiatus to have children.

Her original plan was to "stay home" with the children until they started school, but she soon found herself doing hours of volunteer work. In order to give her life structure, she decided to do some contract programming where she could set her own hours. That worked well until she was offered a part time job at Saunders Manufacturing in Readfield. She joined their family and that is where she has worked since. She found it to be an exciting and fun place to work with terrific and knowledgeable people. The environment there was constantly changing and, because Saunders was a small company, she had lots of opportunities to gain a great deal of varied experiences within the IT field.

Kathy claims to have had a well spent year off between leaving Saunders and beginning work at the Office of the CIO. She visited her children in Hawaii, Thailand, and Costa Rica, hiked the Northern Cascades, and skied Sugarloaf as often as possible. In her free time, Kathy also enjoys cross-country skiing; snowshoeing; sewing; swimming; hiking; and kids. She and her husband have hosted several AFS (American Field Service) students for varying lengths of time. She still stays active with AFS and recently hosted a Thai teacher. She recently joined a book club with the hopeful outcome of reading more fiction and less non-fiction.

Kathy says she is excited to be working for the Office of the CIO and working with such a professional, knowledgeable, and talented group. She enjoys challenges and is looking forward to those that are certain to be ahead. She brings to this position over twenty five years of IT experience, starting out as a programmer and progressing through the ranks to a management position and member of the executive management team. She says that she has been very impressed with the people she has met so far and looks forward to meeting and working with more folks from the various departments.

Kevin Jones

Kevin moved his family to Maine 20 years ago from the mid-west, where he worked a wide variety of jobs from laborer to foreman. Kevin originally started working summers at United States Steel Corp. for college tuition, but within a blink of eye, 15 years had passed. After the Andrew Carnegie blast furnace was finally shut down, Kevin transferred to Wyoming managing ore operations at a taconite mine based in the Shoshone National Forest. (It was quite a change from an urban setting to working on the Continental Divide at over 13,000 feet.) Operations in Wyoming were brief and Kevin transferred to a facility building oil rigging. Oil embargos forced the closure of that plant.

Since one of Kevin's hobbies was developing games for Atari and Commodore PCs, he decided to turn his part-time hobby into a career and, with a new degree in hand, moved in with his sister, a Vassalboro Elementary School teacher. Kevin's family had been vacationing in Maine for years and they were determined to make it their new home. That first winter, one of the coldest in Maine's history, was quite a shock to someone who considered the temperate winters of the Ohio valley as being brutal! Initially it felt like a life of exile without his wife, Joan, and their two daughters, Shannon and Briar.

Kevin worked for Val Wood at Central Computer Services in the database design group. Spring and his family arrived and they moved to Mt. Vernon. The family agreed that Joan should go back to Ohio to pursue her degree in biology. While this was going to take close to two years, everyone was confident that Kevin's daughters, ages 12 and 10, could take care of dad. Kevin fondly remembers that "single parent" period and it profoundly influenced forever his relationship with his daughters.

That first assignment with the database team set the tempo for the next twenty years. Keeping at the forefront of IT and constantly exploring its limits has been Kevin's focus. Both Kevin and Joan are avid environmentalists, with Joan now working as an Environmental Specialist at DEP, but these two high-technology wonks jump at any opportunity to be outdoors. Kevin is passionate about diving; hiking; skiing; carpentry; or just spending time working out in the garage on his classic Miata roadster. Anything of a physical nature to balance the sedentary office work.

"Its all about balance and taking nothing for granted", is Kevin's motto. He experienced seeing the largest corporation in the world, USS, fade away to nothing. "I love my job with the State of Maine but I don't expect any career to define me. Family and friends are the best measurement of success and I believe that there's nothing that can't be accomplished, providing you keep perspective."

After a number of years managing Desktop Support Services in BIS, Kevin hopes his experience and technical skills bring a new balance to the CIO's strategic office.

Dr. Joe Szakas, Professor – Mentor – Friend!

BY MARY N. CLOUTIER

This month marks the start of Capitol Campus' second year. "Capitol Campus", a collaboration between the State and the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA), offers courses taught by university professors/instructors to State employees in State facilities.

UMA's Computer Information Systems (CIS) courses fall into six focus areas: web design[1]; programming[2]; systems analysis/database design[3]; Linux (open source); Geographic Information Systems (GIS); and Beowulf (Linux cluster). GIS is a new offering and has been developed with funding from the National Science Foundation grant. Approved in June of 2002, this grant (a first for UMA), enabled the development of an integrated undergraduate GIS curriculum for five University of Maine campuses.

Therefore, students take essentially the same GIS class at UMA, and at UM 1) Fort Kent (which specializes in using GIS in forestry applications); 2) Machias (which specializes in meteorology applications); 3) Southern Maine and Farmington (which specialize in geography applications). The grant also purchased two survey grade GPS receivers and ESRI software for students' use. Dr. Szakas emphasizes the key role GIS plays in making spatial decisions, for example, assessing the effectiveness of crime fighting programs.

Like GIS, Beowulf is a new UMA initiative. You'll remember from your high school reading that Beowulf[4] is a monster. Based upon his PhD dissertation, Joe is leading the Beowulf initiative, which will harness the power of individual desktop computers into a parallel processing "monster" super computer. (Dr. Szakas earned a Doctor of Philosophy in June 1997, from Ohio State University. His major was Geodetic Science - Computer Cartography.) Dr. Szakas plans to use the Beowulf cluster with his research interest in crime mapping on areas with heavy computational requirements (e.g. optimal police patrol routes that minimize response times.)

Initially, as an undergraduate at the University of Michigan – Dearborn, Joe didn't do well in computer classes. He says, "Because I struggled, I can appreciate what students go through." However, Joe didn't quit taking computer classes to become a history teacher like his Dad. By the time he was a senior, Joe noted "I got it", and he majored in computer science and minored in math. Today Joe is a terrific teacher of non-traditional students like Capitol Campus' state employees. Joe feels "any teacher should strive to answer the 'why' question – providing context and rationale – in order to transfer knowledge."

He honed his craft while teaching computer classes at American military bases throughout Korea, while under contract with the University of Maryland. Why Korea? Joe's wife, Kathleen, is a major in the Air Force Reserves and she was stationed there 3/99-5/2000. They are the parents of a two year old daughter and are expecting that a "new version will come on-line" in March, 2004. With Kathleen, Joe has traveled the world extensively and notes that "news articles do not adequately reflect the danger or pressure felt by US troops overseas."

Dr. Szakas has been the Coordinator of the University of Maine at Augusta's Department of Computer Information Systems since September 2001. See *http://cisx2.uma.maine.edu/* for a detailed explanation of UMA's associate, bachelor and post Baccalaureate offerings. He may be reached by e-mailing *szakas@maine.edu.*

[1] HTML, Java Script, CGI/Perl, XML and Web authoring tools
[2] Java, Visual Basic, C++, C#, .NET
[3] Oracle
[4] See *http://www.uky.edu/ArtsSciences/English/Beowulf/eBeowulf/guide.htm*

TRANSITIONS

Kathy Record began her position as an Information Technology Management Analyst/Public Service Coordinator II with the Office of the CIO on November 18, 2003.
Kevin Jones has accepted an Information Technology Management Analyst/Public Service Coordinator II position at the Office of the CIO effective December 8, 2003. Kevin has been working in state government since November 1983.
Ruth Boisvert has accepted a Senior Programmer Analyst position in Development Services' MFASIS group effective December 15, 2003.

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neb.newsletter@maine.gov or via our newsletter Web site on the Internet at:
http://www.maine.gov/newsletter/index.htm